

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2288

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA JAPAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 13925

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, JA, SREF

SUBJECT: SOVIET REACTION TO MIG-25 DEFECTION

REF: A. TOKYO 13918 B. MOSCOW 14512

SUMMARY. SOVIET EMBOFF CRITICIZED JAPANESE HANDLING OF DEFECTOR ALONG LINES OF TASS STATEMENT THEN ASKED EMBOFF IF BELENKO HAD, IN FACT, GONE TO US ON OWN VOLITION. EMBOFF SAID HE HAD. SOVIET APPROACH WAS LOW-KEY AND UNEMOTIONAL. REMARKABLE ASPECT OF CONVERSATION WITH THAT UNITED STATES, WHICH HAD ACCEPTED DEFECTOR AND WOULD BE BENEFICIARY OF INTELLIGENCE DERIVED, NOT CASTIGATED AT ALL. END SUMMARY.

1. AT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MONTHLY LUNCH SEPTEMBER 16 SET UP SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, SOVIET POLITICAL COUNSELOR KOMAROVSKY HANDED EMBOFF COPY OF TASS STATEMENT ON BELENKO. THOUGH STATEMENT WAS CARRIED THROUGH PRESS CHANNELS, IT HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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BEEEN CAREFULLY THOUGHT THROUGH AND REPRESENTED THE

GOVERNMENT'S POSITION, KOMAROVSKY CONTINUED. AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED, THE MOST IMPORTANT PASSAGE WAS THE FINAL PARAGRAPH WHICH READ: QUOTE. JAPANESE OFFICIALS DECLARE THAT THEY WOULD LIKE THE AFFAIR INVOLVING THE LANDING OF THE SOVIET PLANE IN JAPAN TO BE SETTLED WITHOUT DETRIMENT TO SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS. FACTS, HOWEVER, PROVE OTHERWISE. THE PLANE HAS NOT YET BEEN RETURNED TO ITS OWNER, THE SOVIET UNION. THE ACTS OF THE JAPANESE AUTHORITIES WITH REGARD TO THE SOVIET PLANE AND ITS PILOT COULD NOT BE QUALIFIED AS BEING OTHER THAN UNFRIENDLY TO THE SOVIET UNION, FLOUTING ELEMENTARY NORMS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE PRACTICE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN STATES, ESPECIALLY NEIGHBOUR STATES. IN ACTING IN THIS WAY JAPAN AGGRAVATES SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS, THEIR PRESENT AND FUTURE. UNQUOTE.

2. KOMAROVSKY COMPLAINED THAT THE JAPANESE HAD NEVER MADE A STRONG EFFORT TO PROVE TO THE USSR THAT BELENKO HAD DEFECTED OF HIS OWN FREE WILL. THE INTERVIEW WITH BELENKO FINALLY ARRANGED BY THE JAPANESE BEFORE BELENKO'S DEPARTURE HAD BEEN A FARCE, HE SAID, WITH THE PILOT'S BEHAVIOR SUGGESTING THAT HE HAD BEEN DRUGGED. KOMAROVSKY SAID TH READ IN PRESS THAT EMBOFF HAD INTERVIEWED BELENKO BEFORE DEPARTURE AND WONDERED IF THIS WAS TRUE AND IF EMBOFF COULD MAKE ANY COMMENT ON BELENKO'S CONDITION.

3. EMBOFF REPLIED THAT HE HAD SEEN BELENKO FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES ON DAY OF DEPARTURE AT INTERVIEW SET UP BY GOJ AT WATER POLICE STATION TO CONFIRM FORMALLY BELENKO'S INTENTION TO DEFECT AND THE US AGREEMENT TO RECEIVE HIM. THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO DOUBT FROM THE INTERVIEW THAT BELENKO WAS GOING TO THE UNITED STATES OF HIS OWN FREE WILL. THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE THAT HE WAS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ANY DRUG. KOMAROVSKY THANKED EMBOFF FOR HIS VIEWS. USSR WAS CONDUCTING INVESTIGATION INTO BACKGROUND

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OF BELENKO ACTION AND SO FAR HAD COME UP WITH NO EXPLANATION. BELENKO HAD GOOD RECORD, SMOOTH RELATIONS WITHIN HIS FAMILY, AND NO APPARENT REASON TO TAKE ACTION.

4. RETURNING TO GOJ HANDLING OF CASE, KOMAROVSKY ASKED WHY THE JAPANESE SEEMED TO BE GOING OUT OF THEIR WAY TO AGGRAVATE SOVIET-JAPANESE RELATIONS.

FONMIN MIYAZAWA'S VISIT TO HOKKAIDO HAD ADDED TO
THIS IMPRESSION. EMBOFF SAID THAT HIS PRIVATE
IMPRESSION WAS THAT JAPAN NOT TRYING TO AGGRAVATE
SOVIETS. ON CONTRARY, GOJ SEEMED VERY SENSITIVE TO
SOVIET REACTION. MIYAZAWA VISIT TO HOKKAIDO SCHEDULED
BEFORE DEFECTION. DOMESTIC POLITICS
MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR MIYAZAWA TO CANCEL TRIP
AFTER MIG-25 LANDED. KOMAROVSKY CONCLUDED
DISCUSSION OF ISSUE BY SAYING SOVIET-JAPANESE
ECONOMIC RELATIONS CONTINUE TO DEVELOP SATISFACTORILY.

5. COMMENT: ATMOSPHERE OF CONVERSATION WAS LOW
KEY AND NOT EMOTIONAL. THERE WAS NO CRITICISM
OF THE UNITED STATES ON DEFECTOR ISSUE.
HODGSON

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